

# EUROPEAN TOURISM LOST HALF A BILLION EUROS IN 2009



European tourism suffered great losses in 2009 because inefficient visa procedures discouraged many tourists all over the world from visiting Europe last year. The European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) must take measures.

According to the latest news published on the Austrian server Touristaustria.at the European tourism industry has been losing a lot of income due to the problems with issuing visas for potential tourists. ETOA has already taken the information into consideration as the results of a survey that was made among 526 travel agencies and tour operators between June and September 2010 were alarming. **Only in 2009, the European Tourism lost about half a billion euros due to inefficient visa procedures.**

**The survey concentrated on the eight most promising markets.** The remaining markets were summarized under the term 'others'. For China, Russia, Ukraine, the Philippines and Taiwan, the main gateway to Europe is France. For South Africa, it is the United Kingdom, for India Switzerland and for the Middle East (Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, UAE and Saudi Arabia) Germany.

Nevertheless, **the most shocking result was the number of potential tourists who gave up the planned European tour only because of the visa procedure.** A quarter of all potential visitors were from China and the Philippines and a fifth of all potential tourists were citizens of India and Indonesia. About 10% of people from the Middle East and Taiwan also gave up the planned tour to Europe. In this way, **the European tourism lost about 462,000 tourists who wanted to visit Schengen counties last year.** When the data from the UK are added (that means plus 314 000), the number rises to three quarters of a million. The figure speaks for itself - something has to be done.

ETOA will release the complete report about the visas including individual case studies and recommendations for the markets at the beginning of 2011. The report will also include suggestions on how to improve the procedure and also how to encourage potential guests.

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